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# TIGER TEAM APPRAISALS



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# Tiger Team Appraisals

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**A** Tiger Team appraisal is best thought of as a service done for you, not to you. You can make it work to your benefit. If appraisers find weak areas in your program, get busy making corrections. Correct them with commitment so that the problems will not recur. Attitude teamed with commitment will ensure success and return business. The appraisal process is successful when both the appraiser and the Sandian work together to resolve problems.



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## The Tiger Teams

According to Admiral James D. Watkins (the Secretary of Energy), the US Navy used groups of specially trained people, called *Tiger Teams*, to perform special investigative missions. The Department of Energy (DOE) now uses its own Tiger Teams—groups of people specially trained in appraisal for safety compliance—to examine its contractors to ensure conformance with environmental, health, and safety regulations.

The Tiger Teams are composed of Environment, Safety, and Health (ES&H) professionals. During the appraisal of a site, no employees from that site are on the teams. The teams stay at each site for about six weeks. So far, they have visited almost 20 DOE sites. The appraisers look for weaknesses, mistakes, and faults. They also look for *noteworthy practices*, efforts that achieve significant improvement in environmental, safety, and health areas that can be applied across the DOE complex.

This document explains what Sandians can expect from the Tiger Team appraisal and offers some help in preparing for that visit. If serious violations are found, the Tiger Teams have the authority to shut down areas of the laboratory. Your cooperation will benefit not only your organization, but the entire laboratory as well.

## What Sandians can expect from the appraisal

Besides physical problems, the Tiger Teams will be looking at Sandia's attitude about ES&H.

- Does Sandia consider the ES&H initiative a help or hindrance?
- How well is Sandia complying with ES&H requirements?
- What is management's overall commitment to ES&H excellence?



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They will also be investigating management practices, such as

- Conduct of Operations
- ES&H responsibility and accountability
- Documentation and quality assurance
- Personnel qualifications and training.

# Importance of the appraisal

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## **To Sandia, national interests, and individuals**

To Sandia, doing well in the appraisal shows that Sandia cares about protecting health and safety of its employees and the environment, training its employees in safety issues, continuing its commitment to ES&H, and satisfying DOE, our customer.

To national and local interests, passing the appraisal means that Sandia can be relied upon to perform high-quality work in a timely fashion and in compliance with ES&H requirements. It also supports Sandia's participation as a lead research and development organization to resolve national and local ES&H problems.

To individual Sandians, on-site contractors, and visitors, passing the appraisal means working without significant risk to the environment or one's health, taking pride in one's work here, and enjoying the good reputation of the laboratory.

## **The Sandian, on-site contractor, and long-term visitor as part of the appraisal process**

Everyone is a part of the appraisal process, not just members of management. Although managers have a unique part to play during the appraisal, every employee, on-site contractor, and long-term visitor must realize that he or she could be interviewed by a Tiger Team member. Careful preparation by everyone will ensure a successful appraisal.

The potential adverse effects of an appraisal are

- surprise due to a lack of preparedness
- intimidation due to a lack of understanding of the appraiser's work
- poor communication due to defensiveness
- conflicting responses due to a lack of knowledge
- inaccurate or misleading interactions due to hearsay information.



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Ways to prevent these effects are to

- regularly refamiliarize yourself with ES&H requirements applicable to your job
- know where the ES&H documents relating to your job are kept
- expect to be interviewed by one or more of the appraisers
- be cooperative with appraisers
- answer the appraiser honestly and accurately: do not relay hearsay information. If asked about hearsay information, identify the information as such.
- Be sure that the people you interact with share your understanding of your ES&H responsibilities as well as theirs.

### **How to avoid common mistakes**

Preparing for the appraisal makes it easier to avoid making common mistakes. Here are some guidelines:

- **Provide escorts for the appraisers at your facility.**

Since appraisers do not know your facility, they will not understand some things if there is no escort to provide background. The escort should be thoroughly prepared to answer any questions that the appraisers ask. Ensure that appraiser access to restricted or confidential information occurs only with proper approvals or clearances. Access to hazardous areas requires wearing proper protective equipment and proper training.

- **Show concern.**

If an appraiser points out a problem that is easily corrected, promptly correct it or inform your supervisor immediately. Failure to take action on simple problems can lead an appraiser to think that you or your supervisor may not be concerned enough about the larger ones.

- **Always follow up.**

If the appraiser asks a question that you are unable to answer or requests information that is not readily available, supply the answer or information as soon as possible.



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- **Do not argue with the appraiser about standards.**

The appraisers are not in a position to change these; they simply interpret them. If you disagree with an appraiser's interpretation, tell your supervisor.

- **Be respectful.**

Do not criticize the appraisers. If you feel that an appraiser has made a mistake, tell your supervisor or offer objective evidence to correct any misinterpretations.

- **Record appraiser comments and suggestions.**

Give these to your supervisor after the appraisal to determine the required action.

### **Here are some tips for overall interactions with the appraisers:**

- **Decide if you or someone else should answer a question.**

It is far better to admit that you cannot answer a question than to offer an uninformed response. Feel free to refer the appraiser to the person who can best answer the question. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification if you do not understand a question. You are not required to know everything.

- **Stick to the subject.**

Although you should answer questions directly and fully, do not feel the need to engage in "small talk." Do not take silence on the appraiser's part as an indication that your answer is insufficient. Do not feel pressured to provide additional information; if the appraiser wants more information, he or she will ask for it. If the appraiser finds a non-compliance, do not be defensive. Tell your supervisor about the problem. If you can fix it before the close of the appraisal, do so.



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- **Be courteous, professional, and cooperative.**
  - **Have good examples of relevant ES&H documents available to pull from your files.**

Have your documents already checked so you can put your best foot forward.
  - **Let an appraiser look over a document in silence.**
  - **Do not try to second guess an appraiser.**

Do not assume his or her intent.
  - **Be at least as knowledgeable as the appraiser in the following areas:**

any QA plan that your organization uses, how you control your work, how you document your work and where you file the documents, and what tasks you are personally responsible for on the project.
  - **Have files tabbed, indexed, or both.**

Be able to find any document the appraiser requests. Record copies should be either in records custodian's files or at an organization's records center.
  - **Be more knowledgeable than the appraiser about the project task.**
  - **Take time to explain your portion of the project to the appraiser.**
  - **Be available during the appraisal.**
  - **Discuss problems immediately: on the spot is best.**

This gives you and your supervisor an opportunity to clarify any problem, provide supporting materials, or provide immediate corrective action. Make your own notes about problems and possible improvements to your project.

# ATTACHMENT

## Good principles of operation at all times

**T**hese general guidelines have been adapted from those of George Toto, Tiger Team organizer and key leader, and Bob Park, of Sandia's legal organization. They are applicable to facilities and laboratories—like many of those at Sandia—where research and development work is performed. The guidelines are also useful to office workers because they suggest a sound set of principles of operation that are applicable to their day-to-day business.

### Control and Measurement Indicators

- Believe safety and operational indicators (alarms, dials, lights, monitors) until you have confirmed that they are wrong.
- If two or more indicators monitoring the same parameter disagree, believe the worst case. Find out why the indicators don't agree and have the problem fixed as soon as possible.

### Operations

- Do not operate equipment while under alarm conditions. Shut down if possible. If it is not possible, use methods to compensate for the problem until the condition has been corrected.
- Know your equipment. If it performs in an unexpected manner, stop the equipment and investigate to determine the reason.
- Do not operate equipment under conditions that would force it beyond its safe operating range.
- Do not operate equipment with deficiencies that require you to intervene or otherwise compensate for those deficiencies.
- If an automatic safety feature fails, shut down equipment immediately. If an automatic operating aid fails, shut down.
- Test your equipment after maintenance, then operationally check it before it is put back into service.

- Follow procedures; build it like the drawing.
- Be sure all materials are clearly labeled as to content and hazards.
- Do not separate or divide raw hazardous materials from the original shipping container unless absolutely necessary.
- Do not spill or put any hazardous material in a place where it can leak or drain into the ground.
- Do not vent hazardous gas into the atmosphere unless that action has been approved by supervision.
- Do not put any material in a drain unless you are sure that such disposal is authorized.
- Before operating equipment for the first time or after a long absence, verify with supervision that you have been qualified to use it.
- Unless you are sure that it is safe, do not use any material before checking your Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

## **Alarms and Protective Devices**

- Do not bypass or override interlocks, limit switches, or other protective devices or systems.
- Do not block visual alarm devices or systems (such as warning lights), do not muffle audible alarm devices or systems (such as horns), and do not bypass or defeat alarm devices or systems.
- Seek dual verification.
- Check alarms and indicators daily or before each operation.
- Perform surveillance tests on safety, alarm, limit, or warning features of an operating system.

## **Personal and Professional Responsibility**

- Do not take the next step in a path unless you can return safely.
- Get environmental, health, and safety problems fixed as soon as you detect them. Maintain equipment to keep it functioning properly.

- Do not allow temporary or “stop-gap” modifications to become a permanent part of the system. If you do use a temporary measure, it must perform as well in function and protection as the permanent system. The same training, procedure, and operating conditions apply.
- Sign only what you have read completely and understand fully.
- Beware of broad generalizations and all-encompassing statements when writing, thinking, or talking about ES&H. Be precise and concise!
- Make sure that all equipment has been built to and operates within the proper specifications, and that these specifications comply with ES&H requirements.
- Keep a clean and well-organized office, work space, or laboratory.
- Cover or contain all material unless you are certain it is nonhazardous.
- Do not dispose of any item as trash unless you are certain that all of its constituent elements are non-hazardous.
- Do not request Reapplication to collect materials unless you are sure they are nonhazardous.
- In order to determine requirements for ES&H documentation, call your Vice Presidency ES&H coordinator before beginning any significant new activity or experiment.
- Treat wastes and by-products with the same degree of care and priority as you treat your project’s product.

